

The Only Difference That I See

Story: The Only Difference That I See

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Summary: Akiko. Sometimes people don't change that much, despite what they may think.

***Chapter 1*: The Only Difference That I See**

This is just a little ficcy that I whipped together after listening to a song that I don't know the title to one too many times. Enjoy.

Isaac: ::in indigo "Akiko owns nothing"::

The Only Difference That I See

By: Akiko

The water in the middle of the river was moving too fast, merely a dark ripple in the darkness. Nearer to the bank the stars were wavy reflections, pale and silver compared to the golden fireflies that winked on and off over the surface. On the grassy overhang was the old tree, the one that had stretched its dead branches across the water for as long as the two boys could remember. And they had been stashing the things that were the most important to them in a hole that was several feet up the silvery trunk. It was their secret place, though the majority of the village knew precisely where it was. But they allowed the boys their innocent delusions.

"Maybe a little more," Felix leaned back a bit to survey his handiwork. The trio of friends had gotten the bright idea to expand their hiding place. So out had come the spools of string, the bright stones, and the handful of small, copper coins polished and repolished on lazy summer days when little boys were content to sit on the river bank. Isaac hadn't been allowed out, but Garet and Felix were nine and ten, older than his mere eight years, and didn't have to go to bed

until later. So they were using Felix's dad's knife on their hole by the light of the moon and the dancing fireflies.

"Whatever!" Gareth was hunched under the weight of his friend. "It's big enough! Let's just put everything back and go home!"

Felix wasn't able to do anymore. When he leaned forward again the shift in balance had sent him toppling off of Gareth. They both fell off of the overhang and tumbled into the water, disrupting the reflections with a mess of ripples and sending the fireflies into the bushes.

"Now look what you did," Gareth muttered glumly, pushing his wet hair away from his face. "We're going to get in trouble, we're not supposed to-"

"Be quiet! I dropped my dad's knife!" Felix said in a panicked whisper, afraid to be overheard by anyone that might have been spying on them. "Do you see it anywhere?"

"It's dark," Gareth muttered, but he began sloshing in the mud along with his friend to try and find the missing knife.

"Gareth! Felix!"

Gareth cringed, it was the one voice in all of Vale that he wanted to hear the least.

Gareth's sister Kay was only a few months older than Felix, but that small age difference and the fact that she was a GIRL meant that she was more responsible, and the one sent to fetch them when they were late. She peered over the bank, her expression invisible in the darkness. "What are you two doing down there? You know we're not allowed to play in the water after dark!"

"We're sorry," Felix realized that he would have to give up on the knife. Maybe his dad would think it had been misplaced by someone else. Oh, who was he kidding? They thought Jenna was a perfect angel, though she had proved to be the opposite on many occasions. Of course he would be blamed for its disappearance! And even if he was a little guilty, it was completely unfair!

"Get up here before I tell mom!" Kay threatened Gareth. The threat spread to Felix, too. If Mrs. Jerra found out that they had been in the water this late, she would immediately pass the gossip along until it came to Felix's parents. It didn't fully occur to the boys that coming into the house with wet and muddy clothes would immediately tip off both of their parents. They scrambled up the bank at Kay's command and stood flopped down on the grass, shivering when the breeze hit their damp clothes and skin.

"It was an accident," Gareth had the sense to whine. "We didn't mean to fall into the water. Don't tell mom, Kay!"

"Oh, fine," she muttered. "Did one of you drop a knife?"

"You found it!" Felix got to his feet and took it from her. The knife appeared unharmed. "Thank you, Kay!"

"You'd better get home, Felix," Kay told him. He looked at her. In the moonlight with the fireflies creeping out from their hiding places she was kind of pretty. Well, for Gareth's big sister, anyway. He used to think she was icky, but he was finally to the point in his life when girls weren't so disgusting. In fact, she was pretty enough to kiss. He was leaning in to do just that when she realized what he was about to do and pushed him away.

"You'd better get home! I'm going to tell mom!" she shrieked, running up the bank to the pathway.

"You just tried to kiss my sister! Gross!" Gareth yelled.

"Oh, shut up," Felix was feeling distinctly hot in the face. He hadn't really meant to try and kiss Kay.

"I gotta try and get home before her!" Gareth got to his feet and followed the same path as his sister. Felix decided he'd better get to his own home before his dad noticed his second-best knife was missing.

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"C'mon, Isaac! We deserve this!" Gareth was just a bit tipsy. Just a bit. He hadn't had that much ale yet. Just six or seven...um...pints, right? Right. Six or seven pints. Quarts. Something.

"I guess so," his golden-haired friend grinned a bit and tipped back his own tankard of ale. They were in Vault, celebrating their triumphant return to the ruins of their town. Maybe not quite so triumphant, but they had saved all of Weyward, and no one from their village had died. Truly something to celebrate.

Felix didn't feel much like celebrating. Sure, everything had turned out just about perfectly. Just about. Nothing turned out perfectly perfect in the real world. The last four years of his life had taught him that. So he was sulking in the corner, mostly because he was sure something bad was about to happen.

Maybe because half of Vale was drunk...

"Felix!" Kay sat down in front of him. "It's been a long time."

"Yeah," he decided it was time to start drinking and began looking for the nearest waitress. The apron-wearing women were all mysteriously absent from the tavern room.

"We thought you were dead."

"Yup," he still couldn't see any waitresses, or any way to get away from Kay. She had grown to be very pretty since the last time he had seen her at fifteen. At fifteen she had been a flat-chested scraggly haired, freckled brat. At nineteen she was tall, slender, her hair had calmed to a shining auburn and her skin was the sun-kissed color that most Valean women had. And she wouldn't stop looking at him with those deep, soulful eyes. She was a lot prettier than he remembered. Stupid Kay.

"I missed you," she admitted. "A lot of things have changed."

"We've both changed a lot," he shrugged.

She leaned in close. Maybe a little too close. Definately invading Felix's bubble close. After a long scrutinizing look she seemed to come to a conclusion. "The only difference that I see...is you are exactly the same as you used to be."

He smiled a bit. And then leaned closer to her.

Hahaha, Felix/Kay, bet you didn't see THAT one coming. You've read, now you might as well review, ne?